

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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Item #2
12-15-15

DATE: December 8, 2015
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Dee F. Bruemmer, County Administrator
RE: River Action Presentation and 2 year funding request

The County has funded various projects and programs at River Action since 1994. The major cities and the two counties in the Quad Cities have given annually to projects including planning along the river, bike trail signage and other initiatives of River Action. The program is called RiverWay - a Catalyst for Change. The two year request is attached. The funding amount has stayed the same since 2002. County Administration has processed the invoices through the warrants for Board approval.

The presentation at Committee of the Whole will be on the programs they work with at Lost Grove Lake.

November 30, 2015

Dee Bruemmer
Scott County Board of Supervisors
Scott County Administrative Center
600 West 4th Street
Davenport, Iowa 52801

Dear Dee:

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of River Action to present an opportunity to impact the Mississippi River and the Quad Cities quality of life through funding RiverWay—A Catalyst for Change project in the amount of \$3,232.00 per year for two years or \$6,464. This is less than 1% of our total project budget of \$1,171,200. This request could be paid out as a one-time gift or pledged and paid over two years, 2015--2016.

River Action is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the environmental, economic, and cultural vitality of the Mississippi River and its riverfront in the Quad Cities. Since its founding in 1984, River Action has many notable accomplishments including lighting the Centennial Bridge, writing the QC Waterfront Master Plan, the Nahant Marsh Master Plan, and the Mississippi River Corridor Design Principles which culminated in a Wayfinding System installed through the region.

In 1995, River Action launched and operated the river taxi, the Channel Cat, and initiated the RiverWay program which installed kiosks, river mile markers, and historical markers along the riverfront, developed a trail brochure, updated every two years. River Action created ten RiverWay art projects, and has subsidized youth sailing and rowing lessons. In 2008, the Quad City Watershed Plan was initiated, and the final plan for improvements to the Rock River and Duck Creek watersheds was circulated to cities and counties in December, 2008. The implementation and education program was launched in 2009 and continues today.

In 2013, River Action partnered with WVIK Public Radio to produce weekly “RiverWay Stories”, three minute essays on issues relating to the Mississippi River issues. A special collaboration of the Waterfront Center and River Action presented a joint conference in September, 2014, bringing global awareness to the Mississippi. In 2016, the 9th Annual Upper Mississippi River Conference will convene here.

Throughout each year, we sponsor clean-ups for United Way and community volunteers to assist with maintenance of natural areas. The Adopt A Path Program benefits both the riverfront and Duck Creek trails. In 2013, ten additional acres of buffers on Duck Creek (19 acres were planted in 2011) through our Retain the Rain Program.

Finally, 2016 marks River Action's 32nd year, a year of planned expanded programs along the Mississippi River. A fundraising campaign for building a replica of the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi as a footbridge across River Drive, from 4th Street to River Heritage Park is underway. Built on the original berm which still exists between Federal and 4th Streets in Davenport, it will provide an opportunity to not only build an iconic bridge, but also to provide safe crossing over US 67, information on railroad history, the Transcontinental Railroad, and our region's vision for transportation in the future. Two DOT Rec Trail grants are pending for construction of the 255 foot span.

With a feasibility study completed by Alta Planning & Design for QC Bike Share, River Action will convene a leadership committee headed by Genesis Health System in January, 2016, to determine next steps for a Quad City program. The 16th annual Senior Citizens Riverfront Golf Cart Tour was held this year which annually serves nearly 900 seniors. A turtle research program and nesting area at Nahant Marsh plus maintenance of Sylvan Slough Natural Area were launched.

As we celebrate 32 years of River Action initiatives, RiverWay—A Catalyst for Change will continue to restore wetland and floodplain forest at Greenvalley Nature Preserve, Moline, while developing trails throughout. With an IDALS grant, we hope to initiate best practices for runoff on a Scott County farm, Davenport. We continually update the QC Wild Places web site (www.qcwildplaces.com), map, brochure, signage and better access for 133,000 acres of land and water conservation areas free and open to the public in a five county area. Currently, we work with 65 wilderness areas. Recently, with a grant from Iowa-American Water, the Citizen Science Program at Lost Grove Lake, was initiated. River Action organized three fieldtrips for Scott County 4th-6th graders to the lake that were free to schools with bus transportation, water quality testing kits, lesson packets, field journals, and guest speakers included. We hope to do more in 2016.

Funding sources for our programs include corporate giving, foundation grants, state grants, memberships, sponsorships, and local fundraising events. Support from cities and counties is essential to assure coordination of programs, projects, and continued communication making us truly joined by a river.

I hope you will look favorably upon this request to support the RiverWay—A Catalyst for Change project. All projects are contingent upon raising the funds in a timely way; a pledge from Scott County would help show local support for the mission of the project, to enhance our greatest natural, economic, and recreational resource, the Mississippi River.

If you have questions or need more information, please call me at 563-322-2969.

Sincerely,
Kathy Wine
Executive Director